



The Global Language  
of Business

Consumers are scanning product barcodes with smartphones to learn more about what they are buying—or considering buying. However, the barcodes that smartphones can scan today are based on proprietary embedded URI formats. As a result, they can enable only a single experience.



For Retailers

# Getting Started With GS1 Digital Link



GS1 Digital Link web-enables barcodes by providing a simple, standards-based structure for encoded data in any 2D line-of-sight data carrier. This helps enable brands to meet consumer needs for more context-based experiences. Given that GS1 Digital Link is a standards-based structure, it allows the use of simple rules so apps, websites, and POS scanners can enable connections, shopping experiences, interesting product content, and more. As a retailer, you can use GS1 Digital Link to further customize your customers' experience within your mobile app.

# What does GS1 Digital Link offer your retail business?

**GS1 Digital Link helps make it possible to improve safety and efficiency within your operations. It makes it possible for you to:**

- Flag recalled, expired, or counterfeit products in the warehouse and at the point of sale
- Automatically discount products nearing or past their expiration date
- Conduct more effective returns management and deliver better consumer experience
- Improve business-to-business processes for data sharing

## How GS1 Digital Link Works

Consumers scan a single barcode with their smartphones. Your employees scan the same code in your warehouse or at the point of sale. In both cases, the web-enabled barcode directs the user to an intelligent product identity in the cloud. Based on that intelligent product identity, your employee or consumer is directed to a variety of digital content and services to enhance safety and experience.

### How can you get started with GS1 Digital Link?

Whether you use internal resources or engage a GS1 US Solution Provider, here are some core considerations as your trading partners begin to label their products with 2D barcodes containing GS1 Digital Link.

#### Consideration 1: Retailer-Specific Experiences

Determine whether you will want to enable retailer-specific experiences for products you sell. To do this, you will need to work with the products' GS1 Digital Link within your consumer-facing and/or store associate app. Some possibilities you may want to explore include linking to:

- Re-order a product
- Retailer-specific promotional information
- Brand-specific product information
- Store associate-specific information

#### Consideration 2: Changes To Point of Sale or Other Internal Systems

Based on retailer-specific experiences you may want to share with your customers, consider the impact to current systems and determine priorities and a path to implementation.

GS1 US® has a sunrise date of 2027 for acceptance of 2D barcodes at point of sale. U.S. industries voiced the need to transition to 2D barcodes to encode additional data attributes and GS1 Digital Link on packaging to empower advanced use cases. Brand owners are now transitioning packaging to include 2D barcodes, while retailers are upgrading their POS systems to enable 2D barcode scanning and processing.

During the transition, items will require dual marking with U.P.C.\* and 2D barcodes. After the 2027 sunrise date, the goal is that 2D barcodes—including those encoded with GS1 Digital Link—can be scanned at POS by all retailers. U.P.C. barcodes will continue to be accepted and scanned after the 2027 sunrise date.

\* In this publication, the letters "U.P.C." are used solely as an abbreviation for the "Universal Product Code," which is a product identification system. They do not refer to the UPC, which is a federally registered certification mark of the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) to certify compliance with a Uniform Plumbing Code as authorized by IAPMO.

These changes will drive opportunity to enable additional value-add features at point of sale, as well as other retailer process improvements (see Consideration 3).

### Consideration 3: Future Use Cases That GS1 Digital Link Can Enhance

Work with your internal resources and your trading partners to determine other use cases where GS1 Digital Link can provide benefit. Examples may include:

- Improving inventory management
- Enhancing in-store expiration date and recall management
- Stopping sale of recalled products at point of sale
- Automatically discounting or stopping sale of products nearing or past their expiration date

## Get Started With GS1 Digital Link Today



Retailers can improve efficiency and safety with access to accurate product data and enhanced traceability, with the ability to also authenticate products as they move through their system.

Visit [www.gs1us.org/gs1digitallink](http://www.gs1us.org/gs1digitallink), or scan to learn more about GS1 Digital Link!

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